

# Expert Report: U.S. v. Hassan Abu Jihaad

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## INTRODUCTION

My full name is Evan Francois Kohlmann. I am an International Terrorism Consultant who specializes in tracking Al-Qaida and other contemporary terrorist movements. I hold a degree in International Politics from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (Georgetown University), and a Juris Doctor (professional law degree) from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. I am also the recipient of a certificate in Islamic studies from the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (CMCU) at Georgetown University. I currently work as an investigator with the Nine Eleven Finding Answers (NEFA) Foundation and as an on-air analyst for NBC News in the United States. I also run an Internet website [Globalterroralert.com](http://Globalterroralert.com) that provides information to the general public relating to international terrorism. I am author of the book Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: the Afghan-Bosnian Network (Berg/Oxford International Press, London, 2004) which has been used as a teaching text in graduate-level terrorism courses offered at such educational institutions as Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

As part of my research beginning in approximately 1997, I have traveled overseas to interview known terrorist recruiters and organizers (such as Abu Hamza al-Masri) and to attend underground conferences and rallies; I have reviewed thousands of open source documents; and, I have amassed one of the largest digital collections of terrorist multimedia and propaganda in the world. The open source documents in my collection include sworn legal affidavits, original court exhibits, video and audio recordings, text communiqués, and eyewitness testimonies. I have testified on one prior occasion as an expert witness on behalf of the U.K. Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) at Snaresbrook Court in Regina v. Palvinder Singh in 2006 and as a fact witness at Woolwich Crown Court in Regina v. Tsouli, Mughal, and Daour in 2007. I have additionally testified as an approved expert witness in United States federal court in seven criminal cases; including:

- United States v. Sabri Benkhala (Eastern District of Virginia, 2004)
- United States v. Ali Timimi (Eastern District of Virginia, 2005)
- United States v. Uzair Paracha (Southern District of New York, 2005)
- United States v. Ali Asad Chandia (Eastern District of Virginia, 2006)
- United States v. Yassin Aref (Northern District of New York, 2006)
- United States v. Sabri Benkhala (Eastern District of Virginia, 2007)
- United States v. Rafiq Sabir (Southern District of New York, 2007)

In United States v. Uzair Paracha, Federal District Judge Sidney Stein held a Daubert hearing on my qualifications as an expert witness and issued a ruling concluding: "Evan Kohlmann has sufficient education, training, and knowledge to be qualified as an expert, and... Kohlmann's methodology—that is, his process of gathering sources,

including a variety of original and secondary sources, cross-checking sources against each other, and subjecting his opinions and conclusions to peer review—is sufficiently reliable to meet the standards for admissibility of expert testimony set by the Federal Rules of Evidence.”

At the request of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Connecticut, I have created the below summary of facts and circumstances relevant to my proposed expert testimony in the case United States v. Hassan Abu Jihaad. This narrative is a summary only, and should not be considered as the absolute extent of my knowledge base in these various areas of scholarship.

## **PART I: Usama Bin Laden and the Rise of Al-Qaida in Afghanistan**

Usama bin Mohammed Bin Laden is the exiled son of the wealthy and powerful Bin Laden merchant family in Saudi Arabia. During the jihad against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan during the 1980s, Bin Laden traveled to nearby Pakistan in order to provide assistance to Afghan mujahideen (“holy warrior”) organizations. Bin Laden quickly became a top student of Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, a militant Palestinian Islamic cleric who is overwhelmingly accepted and revered as the “godfather” of modern military jihad. Ultimately, Azzam sought not only to evict the Russian armies, but moreover, to subsequently remove all “infidel” regimes (such as the United States) and to reestablish the rule of a greater Islamic empire. During one recorded lecture, Azzam issued what has become one of his most famous dictates, endorsing the use of terrorism as part and parcel of the strategy of the mujahideen: “We are terrorists, and terror is an obligation in the book of Allah. Let the west and east know that we are terrorists and we strike fear: ‘Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power—including steeds of war—to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of Allah and your enemies’... So, Terror is an obligation in the creed of Allah.”<sup>1</sup>

What Azzam’s student Usama Bin Laden lacked in actual religious knowledge he made up for with a fiery ideological zeal and deep, generous pockets. At his last public press conference, Azzam spoke of the key role Bin Laden was playing in the growing Arab-Afghan movement:

“He came himself, with his wealth, in the way of Allah, and he is paying for [mujahideen] tickets and looking after their families, paying for their rent and their transport, and their sustenance inside Afghanistan. He is in the frontline, where the fighting is... One hundred Arabs have given their lives for Allah. What have they come for? Someone like Usama Bin Ladin, like Wael Jalaidan, and others from leading families in Saudi Arabia... [who] have come in search of paradise. They believe that there is a God and that there is a paradise, and that life is cheap.”<sup>2</sup>

Bin Laden has on numerous occasions publicly declared his intentions to strike violently at the United States, its economy, and its nationals. In August 1996, he published his first “Declaration of War” against the infidels. The document announced

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Sahab Media Productions. “State of the Ummah.” (a.k.a. “The Destruction of the U.S.S. Cole). Video recording produced in mid-2001.

<sup>2</sup> Videotape of the last press conference of Shaykh Abdallah Azzam.

that “[i]t is a duty now on every tribe in the Arab Peninsula to fight, Jihad, in the cause of Allah and to cleanse the land from [‘American soldiers’]. Allah knows that there blood is permitted (to be spilled)... their wealth is a booty to those who kill them.”<sup>3</sup> In February 1998, Usama Bin Laden convened a meeting in Afghanistan of the “World Islamic Front Against Jews and Crusaders.” Bin Laden and other Middle Eastern terrorist leaders in attendance jointly agreed that “the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it.”<sup>4</sup>

In approximately April 1988, Bin Laden, Azzam, and others jointly founded a new military organization that they referred to as “Al-Qaida”, or the “Solid Foundation” for the desired Islamic society. The militant group (headed by Bin Laden after Azzam’s assassination in 1989) managed several foreign mujahideen training camps inside Pakistan and Afghanistan for the purpose of schooling recruits in terrorist and urban warfare tactics. In an article published in Peshawar, Pakistan’s *Al-Jihad Magazine*, Azzam explained the logic behind forming Al-Qaida, reasoning that every revolutionary ideology requires a rugged, elite cadre to protect it, inspire it, and lead it to ultimate victory. This Leninist-style vanguard, hardened by toil and sacrifice, “constitutes the solid foundation for the desired society.” According to Azzam, the war in Afghanistan emblemized a divine “trial by fire” of the vanguard; it was a test of their true commitment to establish Islam at any cost. Only by continued armed struggle would the unified strength of the Muslims be brought to bear on their supposed enemies. In concluding, Azzam issued what he referred to as “the final call”: “We shall continue the Jihad no matter how long the way is until the last breath and the last beating of the pulse or we see the Islamic state established.”<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, under the tutelage of Bin Laden and his advisors, graduates from Al-Qaida training camps have carried out numerous anti-Western terrorist attacks around the world since 1988; including, the 1991 failed bombing of U.S. troops stationed in Yemen; the 1993 World Trade Center bombing; the RPG attack on U.S. helicopters during the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu; the December 1994 hijacking of an Air France commercial jet; Project Bojinka in the Philippines (a January 1995 plot to simultaneously bomb between ten and twelve U.S. commercial jets over the Pacific); the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in East Africa; the October 2000 suicide bombing attack on the U.S.S. Cole in the port of Aden, Yemen; the failed twin Al-Qaida millennium bomb plots in Jordan and Los Angeles; and, the September 11, 2001 suicide hijackings of four U.S. commercial jets.

The Al-Qaida terrorist network has had a longstanding and persistent interest in attacking U.S. military targets, as demonstrated by the October 2000 bombing of the U.S.S. Cole. The first bid to execute the operation took place in January 2000, the Al-Qaida network attempted to carry out its most significant terrorist operation since the 98 embassy bombings: a suicide boat bombing attack on a U.S. naval vessel during refueling

<sup>3</sup> Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) <100043.1420@CompuServe.COM>.

“MSANews: THE LADENESE EPISTLE: DECLARATION OF WAR (I).” *MSANews*.

<http://msanews.mynet.net>. October 12, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> “Text of World Islamic Front’s Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders.” *Al Quds al Arabi*. Feb. 23, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Azzam, Dr. Abdallah. “*Al-Qa’ida*.” *Al-Jihad*. No. 41; April 1988. Page 46.

off the coast of Yemen. But before the boat could reach its target, the U.S.S. The Sullivans, the overloaded craft packed with explosives began taking on water and sank. The same boat was recovered from Aden harbor and prepared for a follow-up attack on a new target.<sup>6</sup> In October 2000, ten months after the failed attack on The Sullivans, Al-Qaida operatives succeeded in using the same vessel to carry out a devastating bomb blast alongside the U.S.S. Cole, killing 17 American sailors, wounding 39 others, and causing nearly \$250 million in damage.<sup>7</sup> The Cole operation came at the direction and urging of Usama Bin Laden, Abu Hafs Al-Masri, and other senior Al-Qaida leaders. A lower-level Al-Qaida operative, Fahd Quso, was instructed by his commanders to videotape the planned terrorist operation on the U.S.S. Cole—but claims to have overslept and missed his opportunity to record it.<sup>8</sup>

From its inception, Al-Qaida functioned as a loosely-organized, mafia-like organization that brought together various extremist elements from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, Pakistan, and elsewhere. These groups and individuals often had varying relationships with Usama Bin Laden and his advisors. It was fairly common for veteran Arab-Afghan disciples to work interchangeably with Bin Laden and Al-Qaida—even if they preferred to remain independent of the confines of Bin Laden’s inner circle. These Al-Qaida “franchises” or “associate branches” included Al-Gama’at al-Islamiyya (the Egyptian Islamic Group), the Egyptian Islamic Jihad Movement, the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), Jemaah Islamiya in Indonesia. According to founding Al-Qaida Shura Council member Mamdouh Mahmud Salim (a.k.a. Abu Hajar al-Iraqi), “Abu Abdullah [Bin Laden] had tendency to favor a policy of centralization... and felt obligated to assemble the Arabs in one location, train and prepare them to be a single mobilized fighting brigade.”<sup>9</sup>

Al-Qaida’s “openness” and the perceived lack of formal hierarchy held great appeal in the minds of young jihadist recruits. In the world of Al-Qaida and the Arab-Afghans, even the most junior of operatives could potentially gain high status within the organization by either demonstrating useful skills, or else by volunteering to sacrifice themselves on behalf of the mission. In other words, Al-Qaida offered an equal opportunity at fame and recognition to nearly any sympathetic soul willing to risk death or imprisonment. When agents from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) apprehended a junior Al-Qaida operative who helped build the suicide truck bombs used to attack two U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998, he boasted of his own role in the plot and explained that he “was attracted to Usama Bin Ladin and the group Al Qaeda because it did not matter what nationality you were” and because Al Qaeda members did

<sup>6</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. July 22, 2004. Page 180.

<sup>7</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. July 22, 2004. Page 190.

<sup>8</sup> Indictment. United States v. Jamal al-Badawi and Fahd al-Quso. S12 98 Cr. 1023 (KDT). United States District Court, Southern District of New York. May 15, 2003. Pages 13–14. See also: The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. July 22, 2004. Page 191.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad, Basil. Al-Ansar al-Arab fi Afghanistan. The Committee for Islamic Benevolence Publications; ©1991. Page 199.



not explicitly follow “orders from a chain of command” in the same way as more traditional terrorist organizations.<sup>10</sup>

## **PART II: The Foreign Mujahideen Brigade in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

The civil conflict in the former Yugoslavia first erupted in June 1991 after Slovenia and Croatia declared their respective independence from Serbia. When ethnic Serbs rebelled against Bosnia-Herzegovina’s self-declared independent government in April 1992, the Muslim-led Bosnian government was on the defensive and the ARBiH struggled to hold out against a superior military force. This predicament captured the attention of sympathetic Muslims elsewhere in the world, and particularly in the Middle East. While much of the aid from the Muslim world to the Bosnian government was given in the form of money and weapons in violation of an international arms embargo, there was also a volunteer battalion of foreign “mujahideen”, or “holy warriors.” These ideological mercenaries—originating from a wide range of countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and beyond—were led almost exclusively by Sunni Muslim extremists.

“At the forefront” of the movement of Arab volunteer soldiers to Bosnia were the mujahideen veterans of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan, which had served as “an institute for the teaching of jihad.”<sup>11</sup> The Bosnian war happened to occur at a propitious time for the Arab-Afghans. In January 1993, the Pakistani government, eager to put the Afghan jihad in the past, ordered the closure of Arab mujahideen offices in the country and threatened official deportation to any illegal foreign fighters who attempted to remain in Pakistan. A month later, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation secretly recorded a senior Egyptian jihad leader offering over the telephone to send new volunteers to the Arab-Afghan training camps in Pakistan. He was told, “all of them [are] closed, Sheik, nothing is left open... even the Base [Al-Qaida] is closed completely and from here... except for special situations.”<sup>12</sup> These displaced men faced a serious problem, because return to their countries of origin meant likely arrest or even death. At the time, a Saudi spokesman for the Arab-Afghans in Jeddah explained in the media, “the Algerians cannot go to Algeria, the Syrians cannot go to Syria or the Iraqis to Iraq. Some will opt to go to Bosnia, the others will have to go into Afghanistan permanently.”<sup>13</sup> His assessments were predictably accurate and a number of prominent Arab guerillas left South Asia destined for a new life amidst the brewing conflict in the Balkans.

Following the mujahideen conquest of Kabul in April 1992, a group of five senior Arab-Afghan military commanders led by the Saudi Shaykh Abu Abdel Aziz “Barbaros”

<sup>10</sup> Government Exhibit GX-6 (Interview of Mohammed Sadiq Odeh by FBI Agent John Anticev). U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden, et al. S(7) 98 Cr. 1023 (LBS). United States District Court, Southern District of New York.

<sup>11</sup> Azzam Publications. “The Martyrs of Bosnia: Part I.” PAL/NTSC Format. Length: 150 minutes approximately. ©2000. EX: V000-3764-V000-3764

<sup>12</sup> FBI Transcript of conversation involving Omar Ahmad Ali Abdel Rahman, “Muhammad” LNU, and two unidentified males. March 20, 1993. United States v. Omar Ahmad Ali Abdel Rahman et al. S3 93 Cr. 181(MBM). Government Exhibit 7057. Page 11.

<sup>13</sup> Evans, Kathy. “Pakistan clamps down on Afghan Mojahedin and Orders Expulsion of Arab Jihad Supporters.” The Guardian (London). January 7, 1993. Page 7.

traveled with four other unidentified veteran Arab-Afghan commanders to Bosnia-Herzegovina to “check out the landscape” and determine if the Balkans would serve as fertile ground for the displaced Arab-Afghan movement, which was no longer officially welcomed in Pakistan.<sup>14</sup> According to “Barbaros”, “Many Arab mujahideen believe[d] that Jihad would be continuous [after Afghanistan] but did not know where it would be and how to get there. By Allah’s power, 15 days after the jihad in Afghanistan finished the Jihad in Bosnia started... This jihad against the Christian forces marks a starting point for the Jihad of the Muslims (against the Christians)... This is a great opportunity now to make Islam enter Europe via jihad. This can only be accomplished through jihad.”<sup>15</sup> A 1994 Bosnian government memorandum from a senior officer in the ARBiH Security Service acknowledged that Abu Abdel Aziz had previously fought “in Afghanistan, Philippines, Kashmir, Pakistan, and Albania” and that, moreover, “under the auspices of material aid, there is an indication that his stay in Middle Bosnia is related to the organized transfer and engagement of some 1000 fighters from African-Asian countries into the units of the R BH Army who are hiding from the prosecutorial authorities of their countries of origin.”<sup>16</sup>

The suspicions of the Bosnian-Muslim government regarding their foreign allies increased over time after the mujahideen carried out a series of embarrassing atrocities—including the killing of Western aid workers and even fellow Muslims. The same 1994 memorandum from the Bosnian Muslim Military Security Service Department sternly warned top Bosnian Army commanders and the BiH Ministry of Defence:

“...The unit does not execute the Commandant’s orders. They persistently refuse to provide their personal data for preparing the unit explaining that they do not trust the authorities of the RiK of the R BH Army and that they fear that the authorities of their countries of origin may find out about them. This attitude is in contrary with the advocating activities of some individuals, that they should fight the positive legal provisions of the R BH, as addition to ignoring them... Individuals treat disparagingly the educational, cultural and other features of the Bosniacs-Muslims. Neglecting the national characteristics, particularly religious traditionalism, individuals cause political damage in and outside the R BH due to not yet definitely established motives... [The refusal of the mujahideen to] provid[e] their personal data is most probably due to possible links with [intelligence agencies] or committed criminal offences in their countries of origin... in case their countries learnt about their stay here, they would demand their extradition... There is the assessment of the responsible persons from the 3rd Corps, as well, that the members of ‘El-Mujahidin’ Unit cause political damage to the R BH.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Tabib, Tawfig. “Interview with Sheikh al-Mujahideen Abu Abdel Aziz.” Al-Sirat Al-Mustaqeem. Issue No. 33; August 1994.

<sup>15</sup> “The Jihad in Bosnia.” Al-Daawah (Islamabad). P.O. Box 3093; Islamabad, Pakistan. Publisher: Shaykh Waseem Ahmed. January 1993.

<sup>16</sup> “Disruption of the enemy’s activities.” Memorandum dispatched from Zenica by Colonel Ramiz Dugalic, commander of the Ministry of Defense Security Administration – Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH) Security Service Department. Classified No. 258-33. September 14, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> “Disruption of the enemy’s activities.” Memorandum dispatched from Zenica by Colonel Ramiz Dugalic, commander of the Ministry of Defense Security Administration – Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH) Security Service Department. Classified No. 258-33. September 14, 1994.

Among the specific events cited in the report was a confrontation that took place on August 1, 1994 when “two armed members of “El-Mujahidin” Unit came down to the hall of the Croats’ Cultural Center of Zenica and demanded that the children should stop performing a cultural-entertainment program or they would use weapons.”<sup>18</sup>

In May 1995, the Bosnian Muslim Military Security Service issued a second major analytical report to senior Bosnian Army commanders regarding the foreign mujahideen, warning:

“Service of military security came to the conclusion that these activities, although as a rule carried out under the pretext of humanitarian and military aid provided to Bosnians-Muslims, rather often served as a base for creating of the intelligence positions of the states that are not amicably inclined towards the R BiH, and even as a base for ‘indoctrination’ of the Bosnians-Muslims believers, in posing them the new approach to the Islam according to the ‘vehabijski mesheb’ [Wahhabi ideology]... Special security problem presents that the command of the unit ‘El Mudzahedin’ is hiding the real manpower of its unit and that all members of this unit live and act under the false names and when they arrived to our country, majority of the volunteers from this unit did not respect the law regulations to register their place of residence... A number of persons that acquired our citizenship/passport... are hiding their identity, because they are the persons from the Interpol wanted circulars... With their behavior and acting, the members of the ‘El Mudzahedin’ unit frequently violate current law regulations of our country and incidents are taking place every day, whose perpetrators are the members of this unit... it has the significant negative and multiple damaging consequences for the BiH state... [T]he activities of the persons from Afro-Asian countries are causing rather negative consequences, and these persons are present in BiH as members of the Army... Persons from Afro-Asian countries are the perpetrators of numerous illegal activities, thus causing the anxiety and revolt of the citizens from this area... the adequate legal measures cannot be undertaken against the perpetrators because they are hiding their identity and because of that they are not available for the bodies of prosecution... it is necessary that on the level of the highest state and military bodies, clear standpoints should be assumed, that would result in tasks for bodies and services of security on solving of this problematic that... could considerably ruin the reputation of the R BiH state and our Army.”<sup>19</sup>

### **PART III: Ibn-ul-Khattab and the Foreign Mujahideen Brigade in Chechnya**

Ibn-ul-Khattab (a.k.a. Samir al-Suwailem) was born in Saudi Arabia in 1970. In 1987, at the age of 17, Khattab first left his home in Saudi Arabia in a bid to join the jihad in Afghanistan. He became famous when he fought in the “Lion’s Den” military operation near Jaji, Afghanistan alongside many of the most famous mujahideen leaders, including Usama Bin Ladin, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, Abu Zubair al-Madani, and Sheikh Tameem Adnani. The commander of the Lion’s Den operation was Abu Abdur-Rahman As-Sarehi (a.k.a. Hassan As-Sarehi), the personal teacher and trainer of Ibn-ul-Khattab

<sup>18</sup> “Disruption of the enemy’s activities.” Memorandum dispatched from Zenica by Colonel Ramiz Dugalic, commander of the Ministry of Defense Security Administration – Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH) Security Service Department. Classified No. 258-33. September 14, 1994.

<sup>19</sup> “Review of the Information on Activities of the Persons from Afro-Asian Countries Directly Before the War and During the War in the Territory of BiH Republic.” Report written by the BiH Administration of the Military Security Service– Department for Analytical and Informative Affairs.” Sarajevo; May 6, 1995.

who had taught him much of what he knew from the time Khattab came to Afghanistan as a young teenager. In 1995, the Pakistani government arrested As-Sarehi and extradited him to Saudi Arabia to face charges of involvement in the terrorist bombing of a U.S. military facility in Riyadh.<sup>20</sup>

After winning glory and respect among the Arab mujahideen on the Afghan frontline, Khattab went on to lead mujahideen delegations on expeditions into other emerging conflict zones in the Muslim world, including in Tajikistan and the Caucasus region. Khattab became particularly recognizable in his role as senior commander of foreign mujahideen forces in Chechnya, including for his insistence on personally participating in combat operations. In the spring of 1995, Ibn-ul-Khattab and eight other Arab-Afghans first arrived in Chechnya to aid the native resistance. Among this group of well-known senior Arab mujahideen commanders who had fought together in Afghanistan and Tajikistan were Yaqub al-Ghamidi (and his deputy Abu Walid al-Ghamidi), Abu Jafar al-Yemeni, Hakim al-Madani, and Abu Bakr Aqeedah.<sup>21</sup> Teamed up with a well-trained Chechen Islamist guerilla, Shamil Basayev, Khattab and his "friends" quickly established a "foreign holy warrior" battalion in Chechnya to both offer military training to willing locals and to conduct guerilla attacks on Russian forces. That battalion was primarily responsible for no less than five major armed assaults (Khartashoi in 1995; Shatoi in 1996; Yashmardy in 1996; and twice in Dagestan in 1997 and 1999). By estimates from Moscow, the April 1996 ambush at Shatoi alone left 223 Russian soldiers dead (including 26 "senior officers") and 50 military vehicles destroyed. The Arab battalion was also involved in the now-famous guerilla operation that retook Grozny from Russian control in August 1996, and a daring attack on a military base some 100 kilometers inside Russia in December 1997.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Khattab was responsible for restarting the Chechen war when he led several thousand guerillas in an armed adventure to "liberate" neighboring Dagestan from Russian control in August 1999.

Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev himself is no stranger to religious conflict nor to the Arab-Afghans. As civil conflict threatened to emerge in the Caucasus during the late 1980s, he traveled to the tense regions of Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh, where he actively fought "the Crucifixers." When the USSR finally crumbled in the summer of 1991, Basayev organized "several units" to receive training and indoctrination at the Arab mujahideen camps in Afghanistan. Those units, presumably along with Shamil himself, were subsequently dispatched to fight alongside Islamic militants in Tajikistan. However, Basayev really earned his reputation during the first Russo-Chechen war for literally bringing the Russian army "to its knees." In June 1995, he led a daring raid on the southern Russian town of Budyonnovsk, where 100 Chechens successfully held out against almost 15,000 enemy troops. Basayev also claims to have commanded the 11,000 guerillas who forcibly evicted the Russian military from Grozny in August 1996. In late August 2005, Basayev acknowledged his involvement in the bloody Beslan school siege and subsequent massacre in Ingushetia, a Caucasus region adjacent to Chechnya:

<sup>20</sup> [itstrue289077511\(itstrue289077511@aol.com\)](mailto:itstrue289077511@aoi.com). "Imprisoned brothers." Newsgroups: soc.culture.pakistan.religion. November 25, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> "World Exclusive Interview with Field Commander Shamil Basayev." *Azzam Publications*. February 21, 2000. <http://www.qoqaz.net>.

<sup>22</sup> "Profile: Ibn-ul-Khattab, Commander of the Foreign Mujahideen in the Caucasus." <http://www.qoqaz.net>.



“All we were doing was holding people, demanding an end to the war and the genocide in Chechnya, and it was the Russists who killed their own people.”<sup>23</sup> By the end of the disastrous siege in Beslan, 330 innocent people were murdered, many of them young children.

Basayev’s Arab-born partner, Ibn-ul-Khattab, has an equally infamous reputation. Russian authorities blame him for a series of bombings that rocked Moscow at about the same time. In response to Al-Qaida terrorist attacks on Western targets, Khattab commented, “There is no difference between the American Army and the Russian Army. They seized our territory, and Muslims have the right to seek such a solution.”<sup>24</sup> In mid-1997, after settling his family in Karachi, Pakistan, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed—the future mastermind of the September 11 suicide hijackings—“tried to join the mujahid leader Ibn al Khattab in Chechnya” but was “unable to travel through Azerbaijan.”<sup>25</sup> Following his capture, KSM later told American interrogators that “several” of the 9/11 hijackers had also initially sought to join Ibn-ul-Khattab but similarly “faced problems traveling to Chechnya and so went to Afghanistan, where they were drawn into al Qaeda.”<sup>26</sup> In March 2002, Ibn-ul-Khattab was finally poisoned and killed by assassins recruited from within his own organization by Russian security services.<sup>27</sup>

#### **PART IV: Azzam Publications UK ([www.azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com), [www.qoqaz.net](http://www.qoqaz.net))**

Over time, several shadowy U.K.-based entities have gained notorious reputations for independently translating Al-Qaida multimedia and re-releasing videos in English for the purposes of terrorist recruitment—but perhaps none more so than Azzam Publications in London. Between approximately the years of 1996 and 2002, Azzam Publications reigned as the undisputed top mujahideen propaganda site on the Internet, featuring jihad training manuals, interviews with Al-Qaida leaders and associates, and the stories of many fallen jihadi “martyrs.” During this time, the website was available through a series of varying Internet domain names, including (but not limited to): [www.azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com), [www.qoqaz.net](http://www.qoqaz.net), [www.azzam.co.uk](http://www.azzam.co.uk), and [www.qoqaz.co.uk](http://www.qoqaz.co.uk). According to an official statement from the administrators of the Azzam Publications website, “By the end of July 2002, the Americans concluded that there was no useful intelligence to be gleaned from leaving our site open and they... delivered a written order to the local authorities asking them to immediately shut down our site. Our site has remained shut since then, but we have continued to post daily news bulletins on other web-sites, such as Waaqiah.com.”<sup>28</sup>

During a recent security operation that resulted in the convictions of several defendants in a U.K. crown court, SO-13 Anti-Terrorist Branch investigators recovered

<sup>23</sup> “No-one can prevent me from doing what God permits me to do.” Kavkaz Centre Interview with Shamil Basayev. March 24, 2005. [http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2005/03/24/3640.shtml/t\\_blank](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2005/03/24/3640.shtml/t_blank).

<sup>24</sup> Gall, Carlotta. “Muslim Fighter Embraces Warrior Mystique.” *The New York Times*. October 17, 1999. Section 1; Page 16.

<sup>25</sup> *The 9/11 Commission Report*. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. July 22, 2004. Page 139.

<sup>26</sup> *The 9/11 Commission Report*. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. July 22, 2004. Page 233.

<sup>27</sup> “Biography of Ibn-ul-Khattab VCD.” <http://www.waislamah.net>. ©2002.

<sup>28</sup> Azzam Publications. “Statement from Azzam.Com Regarding Closure of its Web-Site.” E-mail statement issued on September 24, 2002.

logs of online conversations taking place over the Microsoft Network (MSN), wherein one defendant acknowledges, “i been searching for some gud[sic] Jihad websites...but when I used to be online it used to be only azzam.com qoqaz.co.uk etc.”<sup>29</sup> In a written reply to criticism by JihadUnspun.com, Azzam Publications explained its mission in its own words:

“Azzam Publications is an independent media organisation, established in 1996, that has been providing authentic news and information about Jihad and the Mujahideen everywhere, from a network of informed correspondents on the ground in troubled hotspots... Since November 2001, Azzam.com has been providing authentic news, information, interviews and statements about the current Jihad in Afghanistan, from sources and correspondents on the ground inside Afghanistan. Another one of Azzam's correspondents, Shaheed Suraqah Al-Andalusi, was killed in December 2001, in the Battle for Tora Bora, by an American cluster bomb. His biography and will were published on Azzam.com early in 2002, and any of the Foreign Mujahideen commanders in Afghanistan today can confirm the efforts of Shaheed Suraqah Al-Andalusi in providing media coverage of the events in Afghanistan.”<sup>30</sup>

In September 2002, another statement from Azzam Publications offered further detail on its risky ongoing mission:

“...upon its launch in 1996, Azzam.com was one of the first Islamic web-sites on the Internet and the first web-site dedicated to Jihad and Mujahideen news and information. Allah has enabled us, with meagre resources and little technological experience, to provide information on the Mujahideen and to provide daily news and interviews from the Jihad in Chechnya (from September 1999 to August 2001) and the Jihad in Afghanistan from November 2001 until today. A great deal of effort and sacrifice goes into providing a single news bulletin and those involved in the news process put themselves at risk from either the missiles or the prying eyes of unfriendly authorities. The last six years have seen at least two or our correspondents killed... The first of these was Masood Al-Benini, from Benin, who was martyred in Chechnya in April 2000 whilst attempting to leave the country after receiving a serious shrapnel injury to his thigh. His vehicle was ambushed by the Russians at a checkpoint and he fought to defend himself until he was killed - may Allah accept him as a martyr.”<sup>31</sup>

The real name of “Masood al-Benin” was Xavier Jaffo, a French national and close family friend of Zacarias Moussaoui—who pled guilty in United States District Court in Alexandria, Virginia to conspiring to kill Americans as part of the September 11, 2001 suicide hijackings.<sup>32</sup> Jaffo’s online obituary from Azzam Publications UK related:

“Jihaad is far more besides the act of fighting on the front line. Masood al-Benin rahmatullah-alaihi demonstrated this... His intelligence and perseverance feesabeelillah

<sup>29</sup> “Other Assessments for Mr. Edis.” Operation Xango (Regina v. Mohammed Irfan Raja, Usman Malik, Aitzaz Zafar, Awaab Iqbal, and Akbar Butt). SO-13 Anti-Terrorist Branch. October 19, 2006. Page 219.

<sup>30</sup> Open letter issued by Azzam Publications titled “In Defence of the Mujahideen.” November 6, 2002. <http://www.azzam.com>.

<sup>31</sup> Azzam Publications. “Statement from Azzam.Com Regarding Closure of its Web-Site.” E-mail statement issued on September 24, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> Boulden, Jim. “France opened Moussaoui file in ‘94.” CNN. December 11, 2001.

were again evident when he mastered the operations of computers as applied to a Video editing studio... he spent countless hours struggling to learn computing with no help or assistance... Masood was assigned a role in the... camp which involved the use of his IT skills to setup and maintain a computer lab and to teach IT skills to the brothers.”<sup>33</sup>

In late 2000, the French intelligence agency DST dispatched a contact to interview Moussaoui’s family armed with pictures and other evidence for their review, informing them that Zacarias’ old friend Xavier Jaffo had been killed during combat in Chechnya.<sup>34</sup> Zacarias’ brother Abd-Samad later admitted to the CBC that Jaffo “was like a brother to me, but more dramatic than my brother.”<sup>35</sup>

- **Azzam.com: Support for Al-Qaida and Usama Bin Laden**

- On June 23, 2001, Azzam Publications added a news item of note to the homepage of its various Internet websites, titled (in all capitals) “OSAMA BIN LADEN SUPPORTS PALESTINE IN NEW VIDEO.” Alongside a photo of Bin Laden, Azzam.com explained in English, “Osama bin Laden has recently released a video in which he encourages the Muslims to prepare for Jihad in, amongst other places, Palestine... If you have any comments about the video send them to our qoqaz.net email account at: qoqaz@azzam.com.”<sup>36</sup>
- On December 12, 2002, Azzam Publications used its Internet website to publish a short treatise titled “The Nineteen Lions” glorifying the mission of the 9/11 suicide hijackers.

“The plane is ushered onto the runway; there is a slight pause and then the sounds of the engine rise to a crescendo in tandem with the adrenaline surging through your blood. The plane ascends, a brief pause, now you are flying. Your pulse is racing, you can feel your heart thudding against your chest; admonishing yourself you increase your remembrance of Allah. You look at your watch. In your mind the countdown which began the day you were given your mission details moves closer to zero hour. You pick up the in-flight magazine, appearing to flick through the pages you once more go over the details of the operation: soon there will be no room for error. The minutes move too slowly, you are eager for the Paradise: finally the time arrives. Without a glance you rise from your seat and dart to the cockpit. Securing control of the plane, you set your sights on your target. As the building approaches, you look about you at the faces of your brothers in arms and all you see is the blazing light shining off their faces.

<sup>33</sup> “ash-Shaheed Masood Al-Benin; Qoqaz.net Correspondent. Martyred 12 April 2000.” Originally printed by Azzam Publications (<http://www.qoqaz.net>).

[http://www.islamicawakening.com/Articles/ash-Shaheed Masood Al-Benin.html](http://www.islamicawakening.com/Articles/ash-Shaheed%20Masood%20Al-Benin.html).

<sup>34</sup> Interview by Terence McKenna with Abd-Samad Moussaoui. Excerpted from “The Recruiters.” Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC). June 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Interview by Terence McKenna with Abd-Samad Moussaoui. Excerpted from “The Recruiters.” Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC). June 2002.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/html/newsoblvideo.htm>. June 23, 2001.

Attempting to conceal your delight you direct the plane towards the North Tower, with a prayer you shout 'Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)' as you graciously glide into the Tower, obliterating an Idol of the Modern Age."<sup>37</sup>

- In March 2003, when admitted 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was captured in a raid by U.S. and Pakistani security forces, Azzam Publications issued a statement honoring the commitment of KSM and his entire family to jihad:

"[I]t is well known that Khalid Ash-Sheikh Muhammad was a Mujahid known for his piety, who joined the Mujahideen in Afghanistan almost 20 years ago, along with his two brothers, Abid and Zahid Ash-Sheikh. All three brothers worked closely with Sheikh Abdullah Azzam [the founder of Al-Qaida and Bin Laden's spiritual mentor] in the Afghan Jihad in the 1980's and consequently, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam often mentioned these three brothers, by name, in his lectures and books. After Abid Ash-Sheikh was martyred by a land-mine in an operation on Jalalabad Airport, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam wrote about him in his book, Ushaaq-ul-Hoor (Lovers of the Paradise Maidens), as a pious man who used to complete the Quran in seven days following the way of the Companions."<sup>38</sup>

- On February 29, 2000, Azzam Publications published an "exclusive" new document through its Qoqaz.net web platform titled, "How Can I Train Myself for Jihad."<sup>39</sup> The release of this document caused a significant stir in the online extremist community. On July 19, 2000, "brother AM" from the United States wrote an e-mail to Azzam Publications expressing his admiration for their work: "Respected brothers, I have become addicted to your website. I don't even want to tell you how many times I check it each day in the hope of finding something new!" The writer added that he had "especially found" a certain handful of items "to be extremely useful and touching, and I would encourage all other Muslims - brothers and sisters, who are serious about Jihad, to read them and act accordingly"—including "How I Can Train Myself for Jihad."<sup>40</sup> The guide opens with a quote from the Quran favored by Shaykh Abdullah Azzam: "And prepare against them all you can of power, including steeds of war to terrorise the enemies of Allah and others besides whom you may not know, but Allah does know." It proceeds to offer a litany of advice and guidance addressing the military training of homegrown terrorist cells, with an acknowledged intent for this knowledge to be used for illegal purposes in connection with violent jihad:

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.muslimuzbekistan.com/eng/islam/2002/12/a14122002.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Azzam Publications. "What Sheikh Abdullah Azzam said about Khalid Ash-Sheikh Muhammad." Azzam Publications news update carried by IslamicAwakening.com. <http://www.as-sahwah.com/discus/messages/3079/3079.html>. March 4, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/qoqaz/html/articlesjihadtrain.htm>. February 29, 2000.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/qoqaz/html/emailsjul00.htm>. July 23, 2000.



“Firearms training differs from country to country... In some countries of the World, especially the USA, firearms training is available to the general public. One should try to join a shooting club if possible and make regular visits to the firing range. There are many firearms courses available to the public in USA, ranging from one day to two weeks or more. These courses are good but expensive. Some of them are only meant for security personnel but generally they will teach anyone. It is also better to attend these courses in pairs or by yourself, no more. Do not make public announcements when going on such a course. Find one, book your place, go there, learn, come back home and keep it yourself. Whilst on the course, keep your opinions to yourself, do not argue or debate with anyone, do not preach about Islam and make Salah in secret. You are going there to train for Jihad, not call people to Islam. Useful courses to learn are sniping, general shooting and other rifle courses... In other countries, e.g. some states of USA, South Africa, it is perfectly legal for members of the public to own certain types of firearms. If you live in such a country, obtain an assault rifle legally, preferably AK-47 or variations, learn how to use it properly and go and practice in the areas allowed for such training... One can learn to operate many arms legally, so there is no need to spend years in prison for dealing in small, illegal firearms... leave the rest to when you actually go for Jihad.”<sup>41</sup>

- **Azzam.com: Support for the Taliban Movement in Afghanistan**

Many of the numerous detainees at the U.S.-run prison facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba openly acknowledge having been influenced in their decision to travel to Afghanistan by a specific fatwah issued in late 2000 from Shaykh Hammoud Al-Uqlaa Ash-Shuaibi, based in the conservative Saudi Arabian town of Buraydah. In early 2001, Ash-Shuaibi's controversial new fatwah began to widely circulate in international Muslim media and on the Internet addressing “the Shariah Implementation of the Taliban Government in Afghanistan.”<sup>42</sup> One of the primary Internet sources for Ash-Shuaibi's fatwah on the Taliban was Azzam Publications, which released scanned copies of the original Arabic-language document along with a corresponding English-language translation.<sup>43</sup> Hammoud prophetically warned his followers, “military strikes are about to be carried out on Afghanistan just like America attacked it with Cruise Missiles in 1998. At the same time, these same disbelieving countries continue to support the Opposition Northern Alliance (of Ahmad Shah Masood) with funds, weapons and advisors.”<sup>44</sup> Given these conditions, Hammoud issued an urgent “appeal to our Muslim brothers and sisters around the World to assist [the Taliban regime] with financial and material means and to support

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/qoqaz/html/articlesjihadtrain.htm>. February 29, 2000.

<sup>42</sup> “Fatwa of Sheikh Hammoud Al-Uqlaa: 2 Ramadan 1421/ 29 November 2000.” <http://www.azzam.com/html/talibanfatwahammoud.htm>. February 2001.

<sup>43</sup> “Fatwa of Sheikh Hammoud Al-Uqlaa: 2 Ramadan 1421/ 29 November 2000.” <http://www.azzam.com/html/talibanfatwahammoud.htm>. February 2001.

<sup>44</sup> “Fatwa of Sheikh Hammoud Al-Uqlaa: 2 Ramadan 1421/ 29 November 2000.” <http://www.azzam.com/html/talibanfatwahammoud.htm>. February 2001.

it with their media capabilities because the enemies of Islam and their agents have deceived and misguided most of the people until they have become confused as to whether this is a Muslim Government or not... At this time, the Taliban Regime remains in a state of warfare against its opposition, the Northern Alliance, so Jihad with it is ordained by the Shariah because Jihad with the Taliban is against the Northern Alliance which is being funded by the forces of Disbelief like America, Britain and Russia and others who are calling for a broad-based government in Afghanistan established upon a Western legislative system... Indeed, it is obligatory to assist the Taliban Regime and to make Jihad with it in order to bring victory to Islam and in order to cooperate upon all acts of piety and fear of Allah.”<sup>45</sup>

In November 2000, at about the same time that Azzam Publications printed a copy of Shaykh Hammoud ash-Shuaibi's fatwah on its website, it likewise published official warnings in English quoting Taliban intelligence sources concerning “a joint American and Russian attack on Afghanistan involving chemical weapons expected at any time.” As a result, Azzam Publications issued an open appeal to Muslims all over the world to come to the assistance of their Taliban brothers, including facilitating the purchase and delivery of “large quantities” of cash and chemical warfare suits to the Taliban.<sup>46</sup> The Azzam Publications appeal was distributed widely and was re-posted by sympathetic users on other, similarly-themed Islamic Internet websites.

- **Azzam.com: Support for the Ideas of Shaykh Abdullah Azzam**

Azzam Publications also distributed English translations of books written by its namesake, Al-Qaida founder Dr. Abdullah Azzam, including “Join the Caravan” and “Defense of Muslim Lands”. If Azzam can rightfully be considered as the godfather of modern jihad, then no single written work of his has been more influential in that respect than his landmark book “Join the Caravan.” The title itself refers to the “Caravan of Martyrs” (“Qawafil ash-Shuhadaa”) who have given their blood as “martyrs” in the military service for Islam. A foreword written by Azzam Publications marking the second English-language edition of the book explained:

“Join the Caravan is a translation of the book *Ilhaq bil-Qaafilah* written by Shaheed Sheikh Abdullah Azzam in April 1987 at the peak of the Afghan Jihad. This book was one of the principal inspirations for thousands of Muslims from all over the World to go and fight in Afghanistan to defend Muslim blood, property, and honour... Due to popular demand and the book being sold out, we decided to publish a Second English Edition. Although a part of the book focuses on Afghanistan, most of it is applicable to Jihad in general.”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> “Fatwa of Sheikh Hammoud Al-Uqlaa: 2 Ramadan 1421/ 29 November 2000.”

<http://www.azzam.com/html/talibanfatwahammoud.htm>. February 2001.

<sup>46</sup> “Joint U.S./Russian Chemical Attack on Afghanistan Imminent.” November 2000.

<http://www.azzam.com/html/newsnov00.htm>.

<sup>47</sup> “Publishers Foreword.” *Join the Caravan: Second English Edition*. Azzam Publications. BCM UHUD. London WC1N 3XX, U.K. August 2001. Page 5.

In his book, Azzam declares that “Jihad today is individually obligatory... by self and wealth, on every Muslim... Allah has not excused anybody to abandon Jihad other than the ill, the cripple, and the blind, as well as children who have not yet reached puberty, women who have no way of emigrating and performing Jihad and those advanced in years... Anybody else has no excuse before Allah, whether he is a professional, a specialist, an employer, or a great businessman. None of these is excused from performing Jihad personally or permitted to merely contribute materially.”<sup>48</sup> Azzam continues on in Join the Caravan by celebrating the “faithful youth,” whose “hearts are burning with a fire, spurting forth enthusiasm, and blazing with zeal that their pure blood may irrigate the earth of the Muslims.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, according to Dr. Azzam, the only Muslims who will be ultimately redeemed by Allah are those who sacrifice their lives in the greater “cause of Islam.”

Equally influential was the second book written by Azzam, Defense of Muslim Lands, likewise translated into English by Azzam Publications. In his book, Azzam called upon his supporters:

“Whoever can, from among the Arabs, fight jihad in Palestine, then he must start there. And, if he is not capable, then he must set out for Afghanistan. For the rest of the Muslims, I believe they should start their jihad in Afghanistan... there are some reasons which make Afghanistan the starting point. The battles in Afghanistan are still raging and have reached a level of intensity, the like of which have not been witnessed in the mountain ranges of Hindu Kush, nor in recent Islamic history... The situation in Afghanistan is still in the hands of the mujahideen. They continue to refuse help from any Kaffir country... There are more than 3000 kms of open border in Afghanistan and regions of tribes not under political influence. This forms a protective shield for mujahideen... If only the Muslims would apply their Allah’s command and implement the laws of their Shariah concerning the General March for just one week in Palestine, Palestine would be completely purified of Jews. Similarly, the situation in Afghanistan would not last long if only the Ummah would march forward... Instead, in every instance, we wait and we weep. We watch the Islamic region as it falls under the domination of the Kuffar, until it is swallowed whole, then we finally eulogise with much sighing and streaming tears.”<sup>50</sup>

#### • **Azzam.com: Support for the Mujahideen in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

In 2000, Azzam Publications posted an announcement on their website advertising a new multimedia product available for mail order purchase—“The Martyrs of Bosnia”:

“This unique video by Azzam Publications, the first of its kind in the English language with real-life combat footage and the first of a four part series, narrates the biographies of some of these magnificent individuals, who sacrificed their own lives

<sup>48</sup> Join the Caravan: Second English Edition. Azzam Publications. BCM UHUD. London WC1N 3XX, U.K. August 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Join the Caravan: Second English Edition. Azzam Publications. BCM UHUD. London WC1N 3XX, U.K. August 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Azzam, Shaykh Abdullah. Defence of the Muslim Lands: Second English Edition. Azzam Publications. BCM UHUD. London WC1N 3XX, U.K. September 2002.

in order to bring life to those around them... Features: Opening sequence showing oppression of Muslims in different parts of the World, Origin of the Jihad in Bosnia, Footage of the slaughter of Bosnian Muslims, Film from the first Mujahideen Training Camp at Mehorich, Story of the Second Foreigner Shaheed in Bosnia: The Bahraini Prince Muhammad Al-Fatih, Video of Shaheed Abu Zubair Al-Madani in Bosnia and scenes from his burial, Video biographies of over 20 other Mujahideen killed in Bosnia in 1992 and 1993, The Famous Prisoner Exchange Operation with the UN in 1993, Combat footage of Mujahideen operations against Croatian Forces in 1993, Exclusive footage of Wahiudeen the Second Commander of the Mujahideen in Bosnia, [and] Much more in both PAL and NTSC video formats.”<sup>51</sup>

The video “Martyrs of Bosnia” has surfaced in a variety of counterterrorism investigations in North America and in the United Kingdom. In the Southern District of Ohio, defendant Nuradin Abdi has recently pled guilty to charges of conspiring to provide material support to terrorism, including plots to bomb a Columbus-area shopping mall and to launch missile attacks on various landmarks in Washington D.C. I have been provided with a series of reports of FBI interviews with defendant Nuradin Abdi. During one such interview, dated December 2, 2003, defendant Abdi described ordering and receiving “a tape from WWW.QOQAZ.COM about the fighting in Bosnia. After reviewing the tape, ABDI observed that [IYMAN] FARIS was in the tape conducting a mission.”<sup>52</sup> Herein, defendant Abdi is referring to the English-language jihad video known as the “Martyrs of Bosnia”, produced and sold by Azzam Publications.

- **Azzam.com: Support for Khattab and the Mujahideen in Chechnya**

At the end of the propaganda video “Martyrs of Bosnia” produced by Azzam Publications, there are a short series of clips focusing on more current mujahideen military operations in the Caucasus, with images of Ibn ul-Khattab (the late Saudi commander of foreign mujahideen in Chechnya) featured alongside those of Al-Qaida leader Usama Bin Laden. A video clip is then shown of Khattab speaking at a meeting in Chechnya in Arabic, with corresponding English subtitles. Khattab explains:

“The brothers in Britain, may Allah reward them, have put in much efforts to publicize the Jihad. There is an organization by the name of Azzam Publications, which is run by brothers who are known to us and maintain regular contact with us. So anyone who wishes to support us or requires any further information about the situation here, they should contact this organization. We keep them informed with news updates about the state of affairs here, so if the people have any questions we can answer them through this organization. So the brothers at Azzam Publications, may Allah preserve them, are cooperating with us in media efforts. They have made

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/html/productsbosniavideo.htm>. September 2000.

<sup>52</sup> FBI 302 Interview of Nuradin M. Abdi on December 2, 2003 at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office; 550 Main St., Cincinnati, Ohio.



many commendable efforts to publicize the Jihad, so if you make contact with them and support them, Inshallah, it will be very beneficial.”<sup>53</sup>

Aside from “Martyrs of Bosnia”, Azzam Publications was also known for distributing another particular notorious terrorist propaganda video for which it did not provide English subtitles: “Jaheem Ar-Roos” (a.k.a. “Russian Hell Part I”, “Russian Hell in Chechnya”, “Russian Hell in the Year 2000”). The video was credited to Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev and the “Islamic Army of the Caucasus”, and Azzam Publications clarified, “Although this video contains some narration and subtitles in Arabic, most of the film is self-explanatory to anyone who does not understand Arabic.”<sup>54</sup> The video was first released in December 1999, sold via mail order on VCD and uploaded to various Internet websites in high quality. It was also available for high-resolution “streamed” viewing over the Internet directly from the Azzam Publications website. It contained stunning, never-before-seen footage of grueling combat between Afghan-trained mujahideen fighters under the lead of the Saudi Ibn-ul-Khattab and Russian military forces. During arguably the most memorable scene of the video, commander Ibn-ul-Khattab is shown personally executing a wounded Russian soldier with an AK-47 assault rifle.

The reaction was quick, and overwhelming. Azzam Publications began to publish letters from fans, including a note from one Lebanese Muslim who cheered, “I never thought I’d appreciate pictures of death as much as I do when I see those of the Russian soldiers that you post in your site.”<sup>55</sup> Another supporter from Australia commented, “After watching the Russian Hell video through your site, I am strongly convinced that the Mujahideen brothers are able to conduct many more similar operations to those recorded in the video. The operations were very effective, and I am very proud of it.”<sup>56</sup> Likewise, cooperating defendants from a jihadist network based in Northern Virginia have testified in United States federal court that watching the video “Russian Hell” encouraged them to seek training at mujahideen camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>57</sup> A former member of the network, Yong Ki Kwon, testified under oath, “They (the videos) motivated us. It was like they gave us inspiration.”<sup>58</sup> Even Al-Qaida itself has publicly acknowledged the importance of the landmark film, “Russian Hell in Chechnya.” In December 2005, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s Al-Qaida faction in Iraq published the biography of a “martyred” member of the organization, noting, “The entire world watched him in the film ‘Russian Hell [in Chechnya]’. In one scene, he holds two BKC [machine guns] and fires them

<sup>53</sup> Azzam Publications. “The Martyrs of Bosnia: Part I.” PAL/NTSC Format. Length: 150 minutes approximately. ©2000.

<sup>54</sup> “Russian Hell in the Year 2000 Video CD-ROM.”

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/qogaz/html/productsrussianhell.htm>. January 2000.

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/qogaz/html/emailsjun00.htm>. July 2000.

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/qogaz/html/emailsjul00.htm>. August 2000.

<sup>58</sup> Russell, Betsy Z. “Prosecutors wrap up case against student.” *Spokesman Review* (Spokane). May 25, 2004.

<sup>59</sup> Erdley, Debra. “Witness testifies against Al-Timimi.” *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. April 10, 2005.

simultaneously. This is an image that will be burned into our memories for as long as the jihad will continue.”<sup>59</sup>

Another unique aspect of Azzam Publications’ material on the conflict in the Caucasus was its focus on the use of suicide bombings—termed “martyrdom operations.” In addition to providing official fatwahs endorsing the use of suicide bombings, Azzam Publications also printed the biographies of individual “martyred” bombers in Chechnya. On June 10, 2000, Azzam’s Qoqaz.net website released the biography of “Sister Hawaa Barayev”, who became nicknamed “The Sword of the Hijab”:

“...To all those who waste their time with worldly exploits while Muslims are slaughtered in Chechnya and other parts of the world Take heed of the message issued by a young Muslim woman who wore the Hijab and was not even 20 years old, whose final words were: I know what I am doing; Paradise has a price and I hope this will be the price for Paradise. Moments later, sister Hawaa Barayev drove a car laden with explosives through the streets of Alkhan Kala and into a building that was used by the leadership of Russian Special Forces in Chechnya... After the dust settled, 27 Russian soldiers, many of them senior Special Forces officers, lay dead... Sister Hawaas sacrifice for the sake of Allah and the Muslims is a warning to the unbelievers not only in Chechnya, but across the world, that the people of Allah will no longer accept the tyranny of infidels... Hawaa Barayev taught the enemies of Allah that they will be held accountable and will be hunted down by the soldiers of Allah... Will those Muslims who are sitting in the comfort of their homes learn the lessons taught to the world by Hawaa Barayev; will you follow in her example of unquestioning faith and heroic selflessness?”<sup>60</sup>

In fact, the Qoqaz.net website run by Azzam Publications in order to benefit the jihad in the Caucasus boasted an entire sub-section of information relating to “Martyrdom Operations” in Chechnya. The website documented in precise detail along with compelling photographic evidence such missions as “Operation Abdul Malik”:

“In Gudermes, Russian troops attempted to stop a heroic Mujahid from crashing his truck through the gates of the large Russian military base in the city. The base guards fired at the truck, however, by the Grace of Allah Most Glorious, the brother used his machine gun and killed nine enemy troops as he crashed through the gates. More Russian troops appeared and fired at the wheels of the truck and slowed it down, but nothing would stop Allah’s plan – the brother stopped the truck, which was laden with 34 tonnes of explosives, between two massive buildings used by enemy troops at the base. The force of the ensuing explosion was tremendous and both buildings were destroyed. Mujahideen sources confirm that until this time, Russian emergency crews have recovered the corpses of 680 soldiers from the site. At least 1,000 others have been injured. On another note, eyewitnesses have reported seeing more than 30 Russian military Kamaz trucks on the road from Gudermes to Dagestan. The eyewitnesses confirm that the trucks were loaded with the corpses of Russian troops

<sup>59</sup> “Al-Qaida in the Land of the Two Rivers – Distinguished Martyr #6: Saif al-Ummah.” <http://www.al-hesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=42828>. December 11, 2005.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.azzam.com/qoqaz/html/storieshawaabarayev.htm>. June 10, 2000.

who were killed in Sunday's martyrdom operation that wiped out much of the Russian military's strength in Chechnya's second largest city."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> <http://63.249.218.164/html/photosmartyrops.htm>. July 17, 2000.